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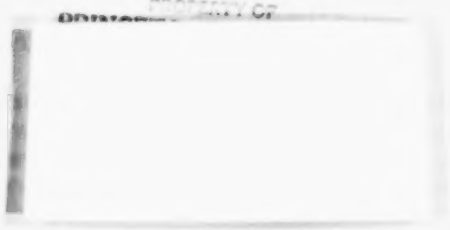


UNHCR ACTIVITIES FINANCED BY VOLUNTARY FUNDS: REPORT FOR 1994-1995 AND PROPOSED PROGRAMMES AND BUDGET FOR 1996

PART II. ASIA AND OCEANIA

Section 10 - Regional Special Programmes

(submitted by the High Commissioner)

GE.95-02581

II.10 REGIONAL SPECIAL PROGRAMMES

A. Comprehensive Plan of Action for Indo-Chinese Refugees (CPA)

1. The CPA, adopted at the International Conference on Indo-Chinese Refugees (Geneva, 13 and 14 June 1989), was developed as a framework for international consensus and cooperation between first-asylum and resettlement countries, the Governments of Viet Nam and the Lao People's Democratic Republic, and UNHCR for arriving at a comprehensive solution for refugees and non-refugees from Viet Nam and the Lao People's Democratic Republic. The CPA's objectives are to discourage clandestine departures; assure asylum and access to a status determination process for all asylum-seekers; provide resettlement opportunities for those found to qualify as refugees; and repatriate in safety and dignity those volunteering or found not to fulfil refugee criteria.

2. The refugee status determination for Vietnamese under the CPA was implemented at various dates during the course of 1989 in all first-asylum countries. Pre cut-off date Vietnamese and post cut-off date Vietnamese determined to be refugees were eligible for resettlement, whereas Vietnamese who did not qualify for refugee status were expected to avail themselves of the voluntary repatriation option. By the end of 1994, the CPA had facilitated the resettlement of 79,551 Vietnamese refugees, and the voluntary repatriation of 24,521 prima facie Lao refugees and 68,124 Vietnamese who were determined not to be refugees.

3. During 1994 a total of 7,018 Vietnamese and 6,187 prima facie Lao refugees were resettled, and 12,555 Vietnamese and 7,172 Lao repatriated voluntarily within the CPA framework. At the end of 1994, 2,906 pre-cut-off date Vietnamese and 11,438 prima facie Lao refugees, and 43,194 Vietnamese and 486 Lao who were determined not to be refugees, remained in camps pending durable solutions.

4. While the major part of UNHCR CPA expenditure for Viet Nam in 1994 covered repatriation grants and internal transportation, UNHCR also financed 109 micro-projects to support communities in 43 provinces which received returnees. This assistance targeted the rehabilitation of community infrastructure including improvement of schools, dispensaries, roads, bridges, irrigation schemes, and small-scale agricultural support and vocational training activities. Further reintegration assistance came from the European Community International Bridging Programme, which provided loans to some 25,000 returnees over a four-year-period.

5. In the Lao People's Democratic Republic two new rural settlements were established during 1994, one in Vientiane with a capacity of 1,000 persons, and the other in Bokeo province, financed by the European Commission, with a capacity of 550 persons. A new site in Khamouane province was initiated, with a settlement capacity of 3,000 returnees.

6. The monitoring of the reintegration of returnees in their countries of origin remained a priority. UNHCR is satisfied that persons returning to Viet Nam and the Lao People's Democratic Republic do so in safety and dignity and have not been subject to mistreatment after their return. UNHCR monitoring officers are

international staff who speak (often several) local languages and are thoroughly familiar with Viet Nam and the Lao People's Democratic Republic. Returnees are also closely monitored by other members of the international community, for example through missions by various national refugee councils and non-governmental groups, and through the permanent presence of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) who are extensively involved in the implementation of returnee reintegration assistance programmes.

7. The very promising rate of voluntary repatriation achieved in 1994 was expected to improve further in 1995. On 16 March 1995 the sixth Steering Committee meeting of the International Conference on Indo-Chinese Refugees established a target date of 31 December 1995 for the conclusion of activities under the CPA in ASEAN countries and shortly thereafter with regard to Hong Kong. More streamlined procedures to process voluntary repatriants and to implement the Orderly Return Programmes were agreed upon.

8. In the first four months of 1995, 1,079 Vietnamese and 2,166 prima facie Lao refugees were resettled, and 3,084 Vietnamese and 1,282 Lao repatriated voluntarily. From mid-May 1995 interest in voluntary repatriation declined to negligible levels due to renewed expectations of resettlement to the United States. By early July 1995, the CPA had lost its voluntary repatriation momentum; some 41,000 Vietnamese who were determined not to be refugees, 7,037 prima facie Lao refugees and 167 Lao determined not to be refugees remained in camps in first-asylum countries. Some allegations have been made of abuses of the CPA refugee screening procedures in certain countries of first asylum. UNHCR initiated in-depth reviews to investigate such claims and found that, despite shortcomings inevitable in a process of such magnitude in a region with no prior experience of refugee status determination, the screening properly and fairly identified cases with serious protection concerns.

9. Under prevailing circumstances it is unclear whether the target date of 31 December 1995 for the conclusion of activities under the CPA can be met. Furthermore, it is unclear whether earmarked funds will be available to meet the costs of continuing care and maintenance for those Vietnamese and Lao remaining in camps in first-asylum countries at the end of 1995 who were determined not to be refugees, should the Steering Committee consider this necessary.

Comprehensive Plan of Action (CPA)
(in thousands of dollars)

Country/ territory/ project/area	1994	1995		1996
	Expenditure	Initial programme Needs as projected at 1/6/94	Revised programme needs as projected at 15/5/95	Initial programme needs as projected at 15/5/95
China	81.9	-	-	-
Hong Kong	14,017.4	17,484.1	21,720.0	-
Indonesia	2,323.3	300.8	1,225.5	-
Japan	1,375.9	1,189.4	791.8	-
LPDR	4,548.0	4,414.9	5,446.0	3,573.7
Malaysia	2,979.5	1,562.5	1,633.4	-
Philippines	4,993.3	1,536.7	1,770.1	-
Singapore	236.0	211.3	271.6	-
Viet Nam	12,352.4	13,487.8	17,672.5	3,540.8
Thailand	4,133.4	2,094.1	2,519.8	220.1
Regional projects	1,539.6	9,678.6	11,606.2	-
Headquarters	2,287.0	2,365.8	2,372.1	1,852.4
Total	50,868.6	54,326.0	67,029.0	9,187.0

B. Sri Lanka Repatriation

10. The repatriation of Sri Lankan refugees from India continued during the reporting period, with 8,147 returning in 1994 and 10,013 during the first quarter of 1995. The acceleration in the repatriation rate in early 1995 was due mainly to the cessation of hostilities between the Sri Lankan Government and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), which was in effect from 8 January to 19 April 1995. Some 50 per cent of the returnees returned to their home villages within two to three days of their arrival in Sri Lanka, while others prolonged their stay in the transit camps and Open Relief Centres until they gained a better understanding of the security situation in their villages of origin. More than 31,000 persons have returned to Sri Lanka since July 1992, when UNHCR began monitoring the voluntary nature of the repatriation from the southern Indian State of Tamil Nadu, where approximately 54,000 refugees are still living in camps. It is anticipated that, should the security situation in Sri Lanka become favourable, a further 10,000 persons may return during the third quarter of 1995, and a further 20,000 in 1996.

11. Since the situation in Sri Lanka remains unstable, UNHCR is not promoting repatriation, but is actively assisting those who decide to return voluntarily. In India, the Office will monitor the voluntary nature of the return, and in Sri Lanka, UNHCR will complement government assistance to returnees using its strategy of immediate assistance in reception and transit centres, pre-resettlement assistance in the form of shelter materials, and, most importantly, reintegration assistance in the form of micro-projects. Through the implementation of

small-scale community-based micro-projects, internally displaced persons living returnee areas also benefit from UNHCR's assistance.

12. As of December 1994, UNHCR has provided limited assistance to 9,089 internally displaced persons living mostly in the Open Relief Centres in Madhu, Palampiddy and Pesalai, in addition to the assistance provided to the 6,277 returnees who lived in transit camps at that time. This does not include internally displaced persons who were assisted together with returnees within t framework of micro-projects, for whom exact figures are not available.

13. The significant reduction in beneficiary figures compared to 1993 was due the progressive movement of returnees and internally displaced persons out of transit centres and Open Relief Centres back to their villages, which began in mid-1994 and continued up until April 1995 when the cessation of hostilities en The resumption of hostilities has slowed down the movement from the centres.

14. The already planned contribution towards improving living conditions in internally displaced person camps in the districts of Puttalam and Anuradhapura not materialize since, as of the third quarter of 1994, the Government embarked a plan for the accelerated settlement of the affected population in their villa of origin and, where this was not possible, on alternative land. Therefore, th funds allocated for this activity will now be used in 1995/1996. However, in l of the new government policy, UNHCR will shift the emphasis of the assistance programme for this group of internally displaced persons from care and maintena in the camps to rehabilitation, using a combination of pre-settlement assistanc and micro-projects.

15. The passive monitoring of rejected asylum-seekers from Switzerland started planned in June 1994, on the basis of a bilateral agreement signed between the Swiss and Sri Lankan Governments on 11 January 1994. By the end of 1994, a tot of 95 persons had returned from Switzerland and another 117 persons returned du the first quarter of 1995.

16. A new UNHCR appeal for almost $ 13 million was launched in June 1994 to co the period July 1994 to December 1995. As of March 1995 a total of $ 6.2 milli had been contributed.

Sri Lanka
(in thousands of dollars)

Country/ area	1994	1995		1996
	Expenditure	Initial programme needs as projected at 1/6/94	Revised programme needs as projected at 15/5/95	Initial programme needs as projected at 15/5/95
Sri Lanka	4,872.4	7,680.7	7,048.6	6,072.5
India	237.0	505.4	368.8	369.3
Thailand	103.5	150.5	100.9	45.4
Headquarters	600.0	570.9	889.1	1,190.9
Total	5,812.9	8,907.5	8,407.4	7,678.1

C. Myanmar Repatriation

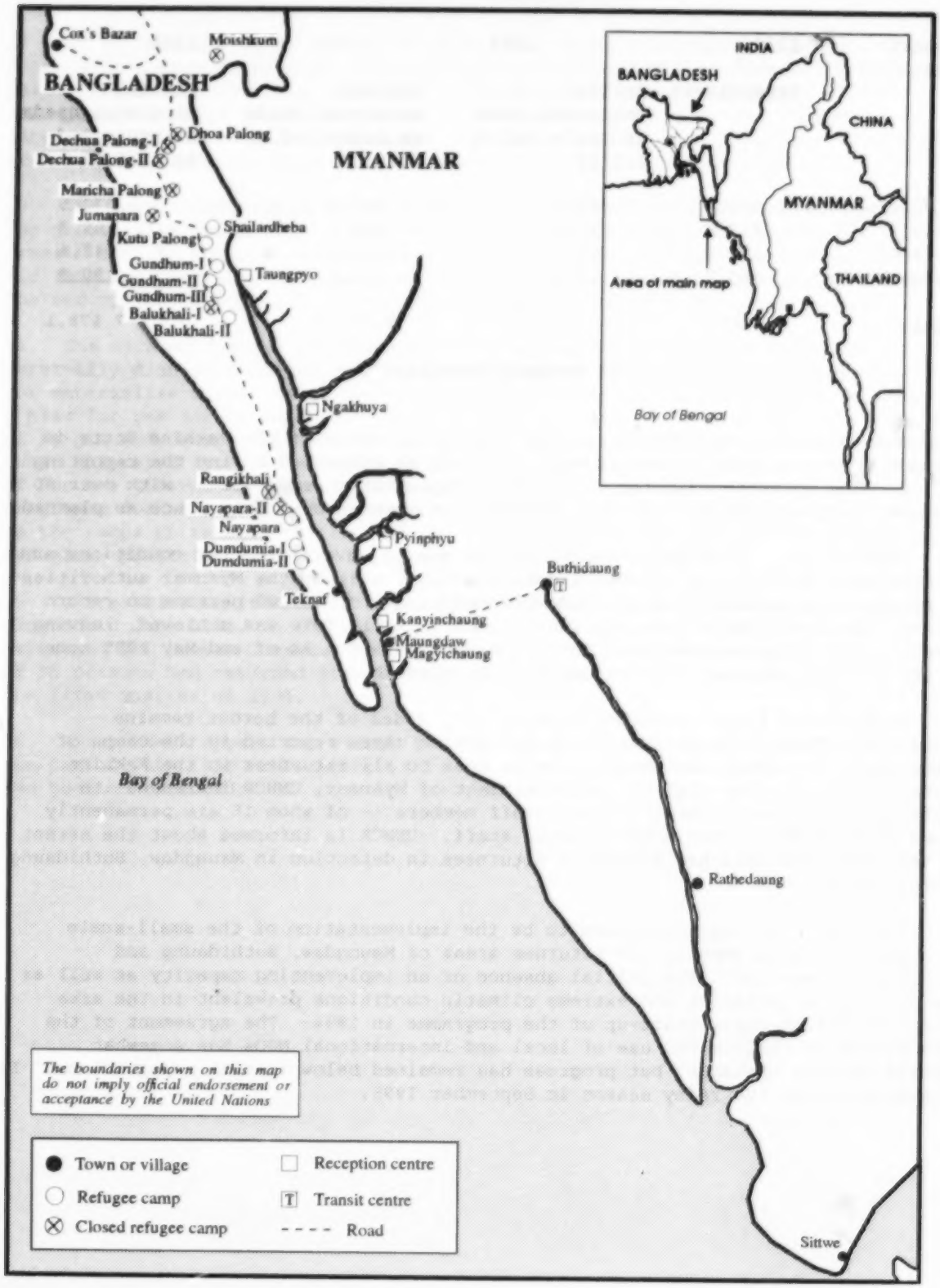
17. The voluntary repatriation of the Muslim residents of the Rakhine State in Myanmar from the camps in Bangladesh continued as scheduled during the reporting period. The positive response to the mass registration exercise -- with over 90 per cent volunteering to return -- enabled the movements to take place as planned.

18. Despite several movement cancellations due to adverse weather conditions and a three-week halt in the movements during October 1994 by the Myanmar authorities to prevent the spread of plague, the planned target of 80,000 persons to return during 1994 under UNHCR auspices starting on 30 April 1994 was achieved, leaving some 120,000 refugees scheduled to return during 1995. As of end-May 1995 some 52,000 persons remained in nine camps in Bangladesh.

19. Cooperation from the authorities on both sides of the border remains excellent. There have been very few protection cases reported in the camps of Bangladesh, and UNHCR has unrestricted access to all returnees in the Rakhine State. Following approval by the Government of Myanmar, UNHCR increased its staffing levels to 19 international staff members -- of whom 15 are permanently based in Maungdaw -- and some 40 local staff. UNHCR is informed about the arrest of returnees and also has access to returnees in detention in Maungdaw, Buthidaung and Sittwe prisons.

20. The main challenge continues to be the implementation of the small-scale reintegration programme in the returnee areas of Maungdaw, Buthidaung and Rathidaung townships. The initial absence of an implementing capacity as well as the geographic isolation and extreme climatic conditions prevalent in the area inhibited a full-scale start-up of the programme in 1994. The agreement of the authorities to the limited use of local and international NGOs has somewhat alleviated this obstacle, but progress has remained below initial expectations. It is planned after the rainy season in September 1995.

BANGLADESH/MYANMAR



21. Small-scale projects under implementation include a health education programme, renovation of rural health centres, provision of medical equipment and assistance to schools. A total of 41 schools are being renovated, 291 brick-lined wells have been constructed, 151 pords repaired, and 96 school and hospital latrines constructed. A fruit tree planting and vegetable gardening programme for the female headed households is also underway.

22. The WFP's food-for-work scheme has constructed 23 village access roads with a combined length of 18.5 kilometres, and has enlarged 20 water storage ponds.

23. In addition, UNHCR has implementing arrangements with three NGOs -- Action International Contre la Faim, BRIDGE Asia-Japan, and the Myanmar Red Cross Society, the last in cooperation with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. The focus of these programmes is on water and sanitation, vocational skills training and special assistance to the most vulnerable.

24. The response to the joint UNHCR/WFP Appeal covering all aspects of the operation in both Bangladesh and Myanmar for 1994 and 1995 has been positive. Of the $ 34.1 million requested by UNHCR, $ 21 million had been contributed as of end-May 1995. While initially it had been foreseen that the programme could be completed by the end of 1995, it has become apparent that much more time will be required to implement a meaningful reintegration programme which will help prevent future outflows.

Myanmar Repatriation
(in thousands of dollars)

Country/ area	1994	1995		1996
	Expenditure	Initial programme needs as projected at 1/6/94	Revised programme needs as projected at 15/5/95	Initial programme needs as projected at 15/5/95
Bangladesh	2,268.6	5,307.1	3,224.7	211.6
Myanmar	7,858.2	15,415.0	12,193.5	4,353.8
Headquarters	1,322.4	1,463.9	1,890.4	2,412.6
Total	11,449.2	22,186.0	17,308.6	6,978.0